



**Office of Community Services
Low-Income Household
Water Assistance Program
(LIHWAP)**

LIHWAP Intake and Eligibility



Learning Objectives

Who can receive LIHWAP benefits

Application and intake best practices

How to determine categorical eligibility and income eligibility

What methods can be used to verify
LIHWAP eligibility



Who Can Receive LIHWAP Benefits

LIHWAP benefits provide water utility payment assistance for low income households. Payments are made directly to water vendors, on behalf of eligible households to reduce either past due and current balances for water and wastewater services.

Household eligibility can be established through income eligibility or through categorical eligibility.



Prioritizing Service Delivery

OCS recognizes that the available grant resources may not be sufficient to fully address all the priorities within states, territories, and tribal areas

Recipients may place an immediate priority on the payment of arrearages as a first stage of program implementation



Developing LIHWAP Intake Procedures

LIHEAP is a good starting place for LIHWAP intake procedures

Be aware of the differences between the programs

Use existing mechanisms, systems, and procedures

Make sure your program can identify individuals the statute is designed to help



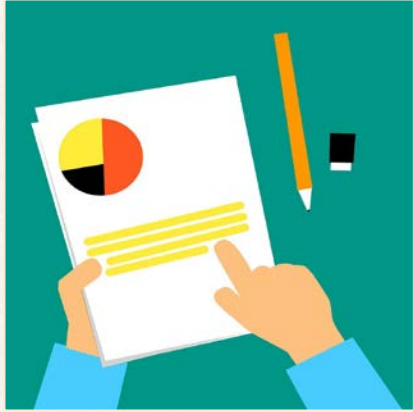
Sample Household Application Template

As a reminder, OCS provided a LIHWAP Sample Household Application Template

The template is a resource that can be adapted by LIHWAP grant recipients and sub grant recipients as they launch, run, and evaluate their programs

LIHWAP Application and Intake - Information Needs

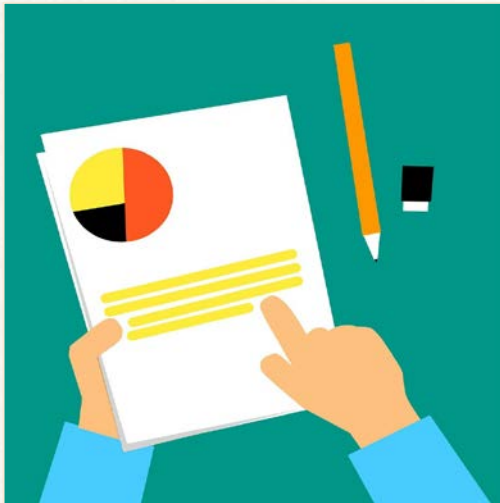
Decide what information you need to determine eligibility and make a benefit payment



Use existing information and/or consider how the information you gather can be used for future steps

Utilize the Household Application Sample Tool

Methods to Expedite Application and Intake

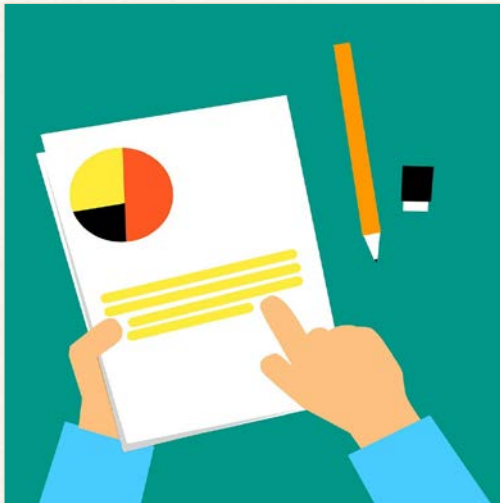


Joint intake applications for multiple programs

Intake/referral from other programs

Intake centers

Methods to Expedite Application and Intake



Identifying eligible households through shared data systems

Utilizing local agencies/subrecipients

Conducting walk-in intake

Eligibility

Clients can be deemed eligible through income eligibility or through categorical eligibility.

Categorical eligibility refers to a determination that a household is eligible for LIHWAP assistance based on enrollment in another means-tested program.

Income eligibility is based on an assessment of the total household income.



LIHWAP Categorical Eligibility Programs

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

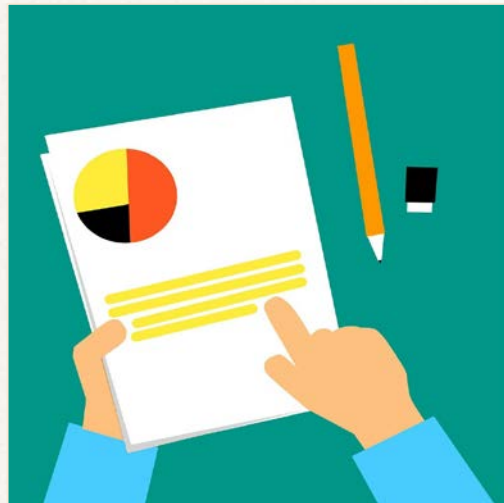
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Means-tested Veterans Programs (payments under section 415, 521, 541, or 542 of title 38, United States Code, or under section 306 of the Veterans' and Survivors' Pension Improvement Act of 1978)



Developing Procedures for Categorical Eligibility



Allowing household applicants to provide certain documents

A client release form allowing information sharing between programs

Joint intake and eligibility determination (especially for programs administered within a single agency)

Categorical Eligibility Recordkeeping

Once a household is determined to be eligible through categorical eligibility, additional income eligibility assessment is not needed

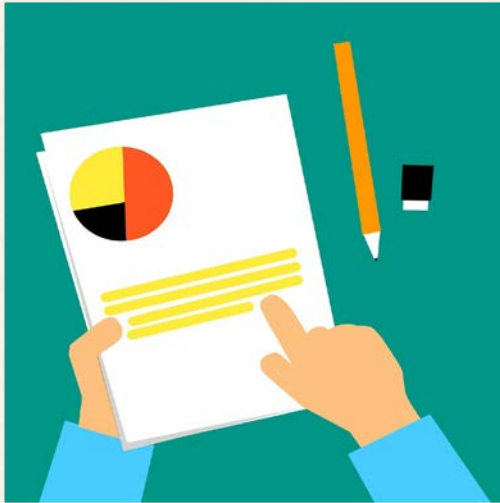
Categorical eligibility reduces the burden for the household

Document income information for households that were determined to be eligible based on categorical eligibility

Recipients may also establish procedures for information sharing



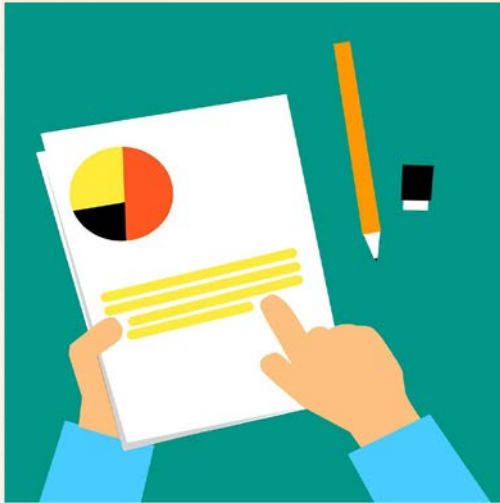
Citizenship and Residency Status



LIHWAP falls within the definition of “Federal Public Benefits,” which limits eligibility for benefits to citizens or to qualified noncitizens.

Statute prohibits the provision of these benefits to other noncitizens, including nonimmigrants (i.e., temporary residents) or undocumented immigrants.

Households with Mixed Qualification Status



Grant recipients may pay the full amount of an arrearage to reconnect services or prevent the disconnection of water services to a household with at least one qualified member.

Grant recipients need to establish policies to pay only a pro-rated portion of any rate reduction benefits based on the number/percentage of qualified beneficiaries in the household.

Income Eligibility

Remember, income eligibility means that a household has qualified for assistance based on the total household income of all household members and any other eligibility criteria required by the State/Tribe/Territory, plus a determination that the total household income is below the eligibility threshold established by the State, Territory, or Tribe

LIHWAP recipients were asked to indicate which forms of identification are required or requested to be collected from LIHWAP applicants.

What is Considered Income?

Countable (base) income

Non-countable or excluded income

Remember to consider income deductions

Keep a consistent time period for counting



Sources of Income Verification Documentation

Pay stubs

Bank Statements

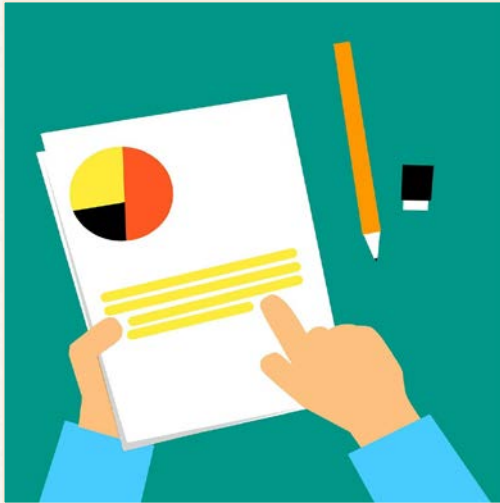
Social Security award letters

Tax statements

Zero-income statements (if applicable)



Identity Verification



Please refer to your model plan

The types of documentation required is at the discretion of the recipient.

Examples include, full name, mailing address, date of birth, etc.

Additional Methods to Verify Income and Identity

Birth or hospital records

Databases for public assistance programs, such as TANF or SNAP

Databases of other state agencies

Consider developing a list of contacts



Case File Management



Include information for which and what type of documentation must be included in a case file.

It's also likely that intake workers will need to document how they have screened applicants for eligibility

Remember that you will be dealing with your client's personally identifiable information (PII)

Wrap-Up



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